

STATEMENT FROM THE EIGHTH SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUM (SARCOF-8) HELD IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE FROM 1 – 2 SEPTEMBER 2004.

1.0 SUMMARY

The central parts of the SADC region (Angola, Zambia, northern Botswana, northern Zimbabwe, extreme northern Namibia, extreme northern Malawi, southern DRC, and western Tanzania) and the Indian Ocean Islands (Seychelles and Mauritius) have an increased chance of receiving normal to above-normal rainfall during the October–December 2004 season. The extreme northern (northern DRC) and the southern parts (South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, southern Mozambique, southern Botswana, southern Zimbabwe, and southern Namibia) of SADC have increased chances of receiving normal to below-normal rainfall while the northeastern parts (eastern Tanzania, much of Malawi, and northern Mozambique) have increased chances of experiencing below-normal to normal rainfall. Despite the development of a weak El Niño, its impacts on some parts of the SADC region are expected to be weak. Hence, the bulk of the region has increased chances of receiving normal to above-normal rainfall during JFM 2005, with the exception of parts of Zimbabwe, Botswana, central Mozambique, South Africa and Mauritius as well as eastern Tanzania.

2.0 THE EIGHTH SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUM

The eighth Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum was held in Harare, Zimbabwe from 1–2 September 2004 to come up with a consensus forecast for the 2004/2005 rainfall season over SADC. This outlook has been prepared by climate scientists from the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) within the SADC region. Additional contributions were from the SADC Drought Monitoring Centre, Harare (DMCH, Zimbabwe), International Research Institute for Climate Prediction (IRI, USA) and the IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority and Development) Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC, Nairobi, Kenya). This outlook covers the major rainfall season (October 2004–March 2005). This Outlook is relevant only to seasonal time-scales and relatively large areas and may not fully account for all factors that influence regional and national climate variability, such as local and month-to-month variations (intra-seasonal). Users are strongly advised to contact the respective National Meteorological Services for interpretation of this Outlook, additional guidance and updates.

During the Climate experts meeting the current state of the global climate system and its implications for the SADC region was reviewed. Of major concern was the anomalous warming over the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, which has been associated with a developing weak El Niño phenomenon. Previous El Niño episodes have had an influence on the summer rainfall variability over a large part of the region. The current episode is expected to remain weak during the 2004/2005 summer season. Consequently its influence on rainfall over some parts of the SADC region is expected to be weak. However, if it strengthens its impact on the rainfall may be widespread, particularly during the peak summer months (DJF). This episode will be closely monitored and

regular updates will be issued. Users are strongly advised to regularly consult their respective NMHSs for the forecast updates.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

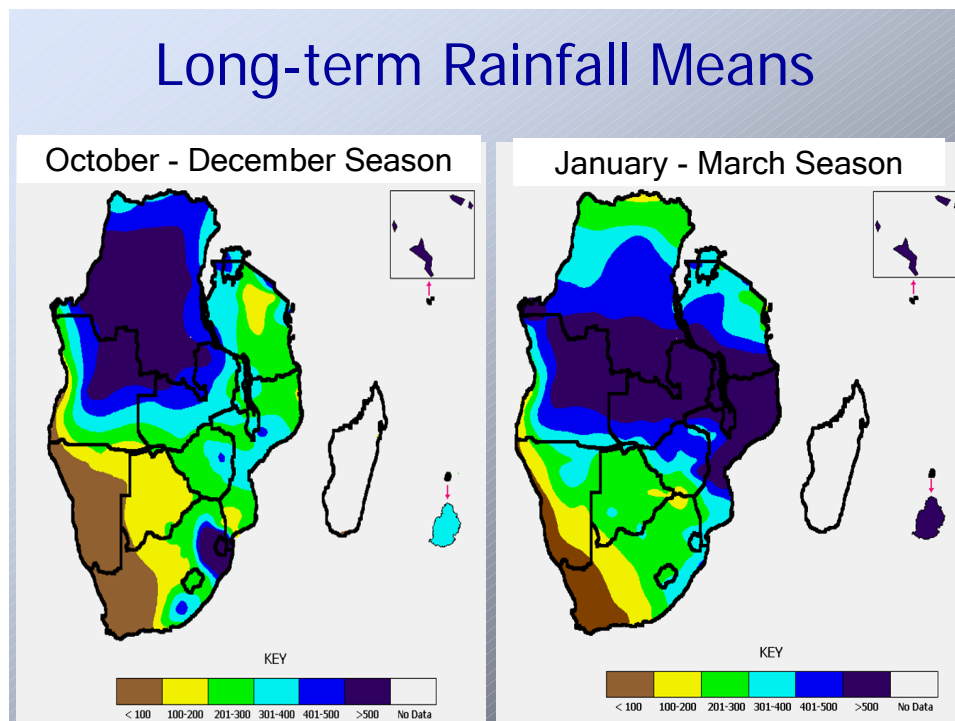
The climate scientists determined likelihoods of above-normal, normal and below-normal rainfall for each area (see Maps A & B). Above-normal rainfall is defined as within the wettest third of recorded rainfall amounts; below-normal is defined as within the driest third of rainfall amounts and normal is the middle third, centered on the climatological median.

4.0 OUTLOOK

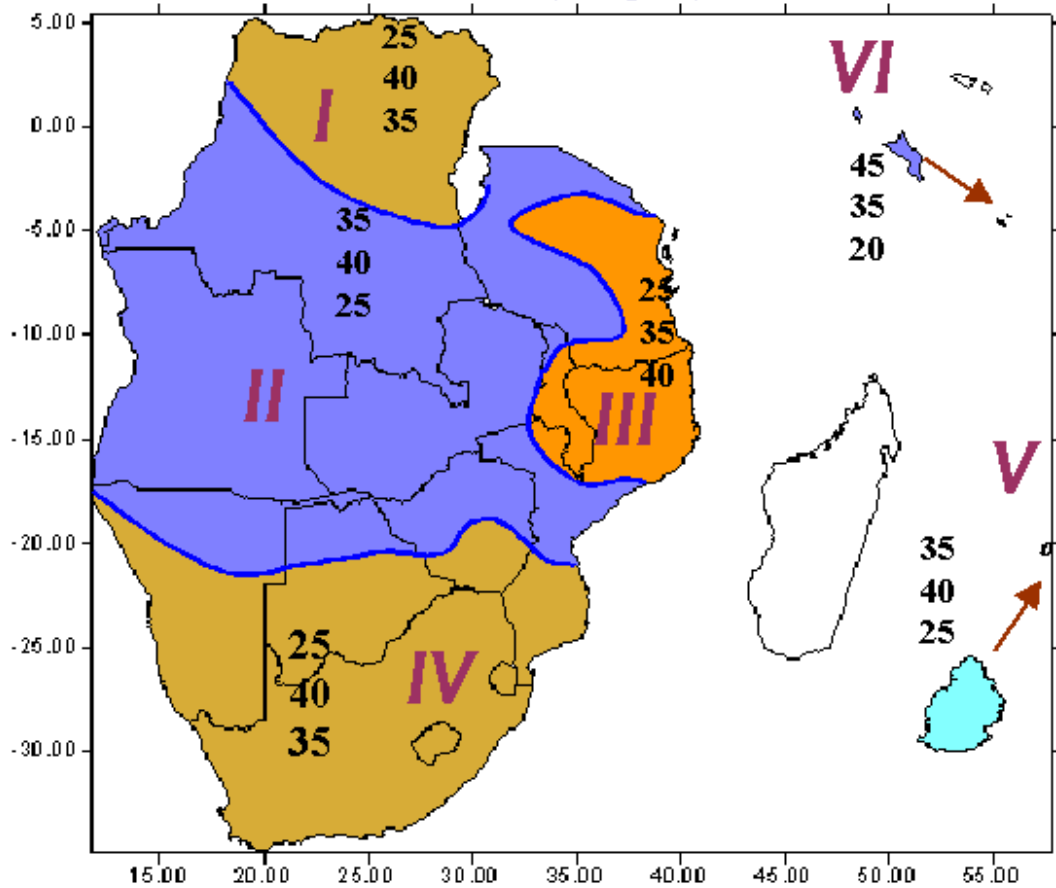
October to March is the main rainfall season over most of southern Africa. Owing to the differences in the rainfall-bearing systems, the rainy season has been divided into two three-month seasons (i.e. October–December and January–March).

5.0 CONTRIBUTORS

The Eighth Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-8) was hosted by the SADC Drought Monitoring Centre, Harare and sponsored by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Global Programs (NOAA/OGP) and Government of Zimbabwe.



October – December 2004 (Map A)



Zone I: Northern DRC.

Increased chances of Normal to Below-normal rainfall

Zone II: Angola, Zambia, northern Botswana, northern Zimbabwe, extreme northern Namibia, extreme northern Malawi, southern DRC, and western Tanzania.

Increased chances of Normal to Above-normal rainfall

Zone III: Malawi, eastern Tanzania, and northern Mozambique.

Increased chances of Below-normal to Normal rainfall

Zone IV: South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, southern Mozambique, southern Zimbabwe, southern Botswana, and southern Namibia.

Increased chances of Normal to Below-normal rainfall

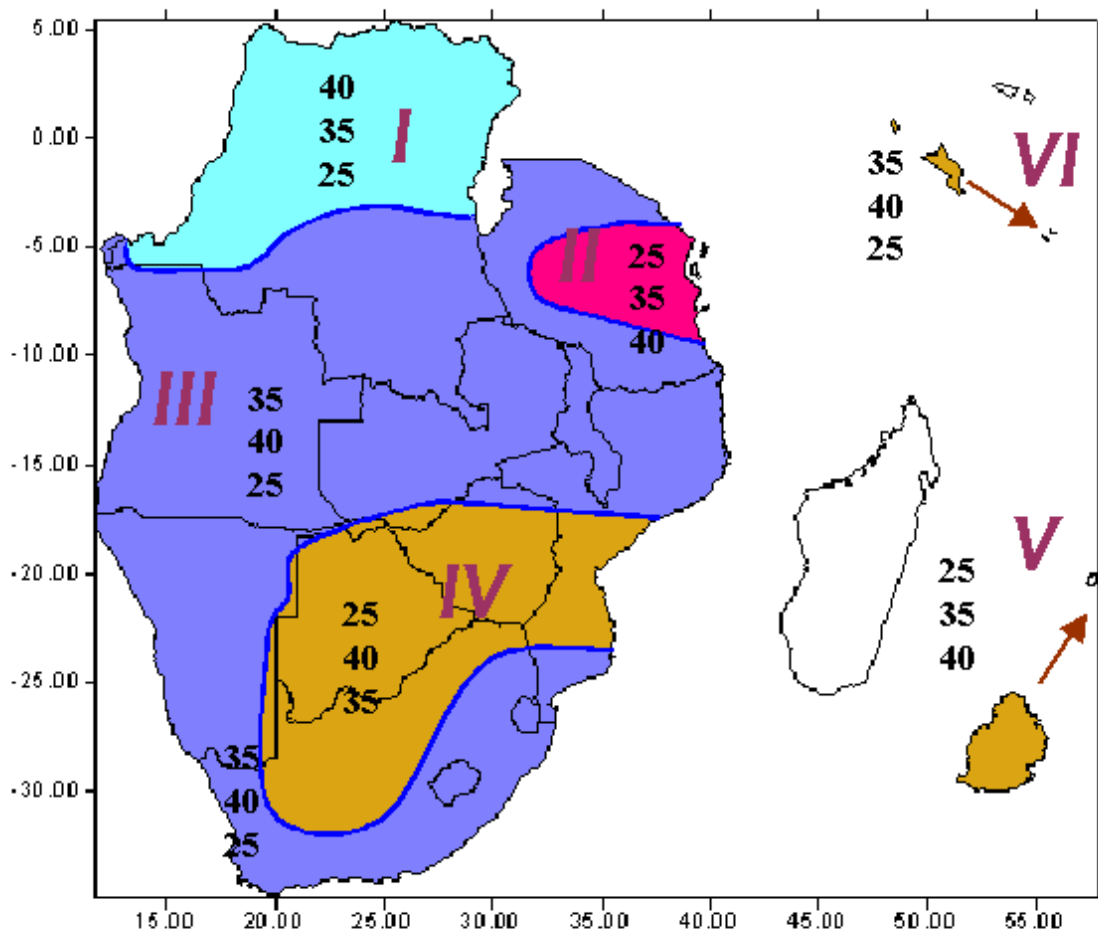
Zone V: Mauritius.

Increased chances of Normal to Above-normal rainfall

Zone VI: Seychelles.

Increased chances of Above-normal to normal rainfall

January – March 2005 (Map B)



Zone I: Northern half of DRC.

Increased chances of Above-normal to Normal rainfall

Zone II: Eastern Tanzania.

Increased chances of Below-normal to Normal rainfall

Zone III: Southern DRC, Angola, much of Zambia, western Tanzania, Malawi, Namibia, southern South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, and northern and southern Mozambique.

Increased chances of Normal to Above-normal rainfall

Zone IV: Botswana, Zimbabwe, extreme southern Zambia, northern South Africa and central Mozambique. **Increased chances of Normal to Below-normal rainfall**

Zone V: Mauritius.

Increased chances of Below-normal to Normal rainfall

Zone VI: Seychelles.

Increased chances of Normal to Above-normal rainfall

MAP CAPTION

It is emphasized that boundaries between zones should be considered as transition areas. Forecast information is provided only for countries that comprise the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region. The numbers for each zone indicate the probabilities of rainfall in each of the three categories, below-normal, normal and above-normal. The top number indicates the probability of rainfall occurring in the above-normal category, the middle number is for normal and the bottom number is for below-normal. For example in the case Map A, for Zone II, there is a 35% probability of rainfall occurring in the above-normal category; a 40% probability in the normal category; and 25% probability in the below-normal category.